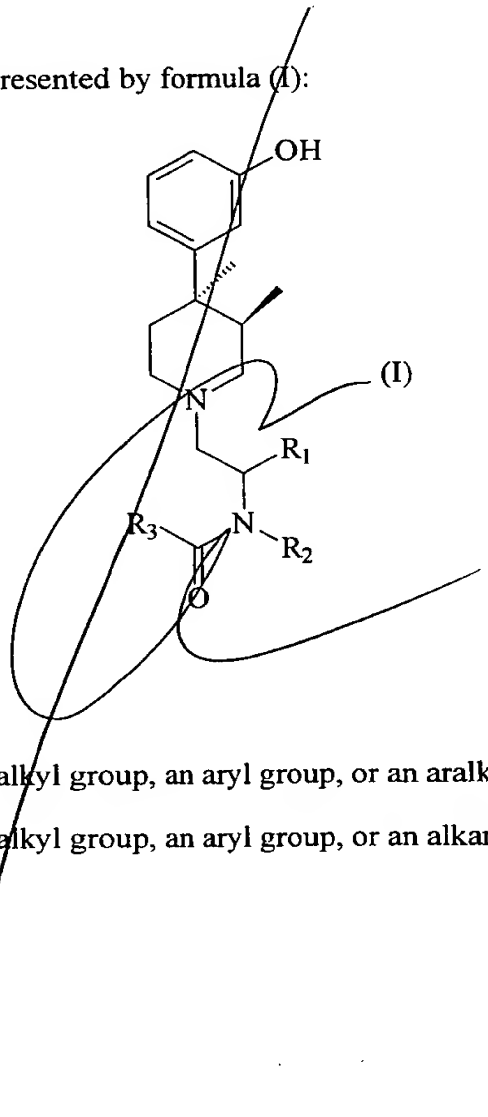
WHAT IS CLAIMED AS NEW AND IS DESIRED TO BE SECURED BY LETTERS PATENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS:

1. A compound represented by formula (I):



wherein

R_1 is hydrogen, an alkyl group, an aryl group, or an aralkyl group;

R_2 is hydrogen, an alkyl group, an aryl group, or an alkaryl group; and

R_3 is

n is 0 or an integer from 1 to 4;

y is 0 or an integer from 1 to 5;

z is 0 or an integer from 0 to 8; and

R_5 is an alkyl group, alkenyl group, or aralkyl group,

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

18. The compound of Claim 17, wherein

R_a and R_b are each, independently, hydrogen or a C_{1-8} alkyl group, or R_a and R_b, together, form a cycloalkyl group;

each X is, independently, a C_{1-8} alkyl group;

O is a five-membered heteroaryl group or a six-membered aryl or heteroaryl group;

each W is a C_{1-8} alkyl group;

n is 0, 1 or 2;

y is 0 an integer from 1 to 3;

z is 0 an integer from 1 to 4; and

R_5 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group, a C_{3-8} alkenyl group, or an aryl-C_{1-4} alkyl group.

19. The compound of Claim 18, wherein O is a five-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms, a six-membered aryl group or a six-membered heteroaryl group containing up to three heteroatoms.

20. The compound of Claim 19, wherein the heteroatoms are each, independently, nitrogen, oxygen or sulfur.

21. The compound of Claim 20, wherein

R_a and R_b are each, independently, hydrogen or a C_{1-4} alkyl group, or R_a and R_b, together, form a cycloalkyl group;

each X is, independently, a C_{1-4} alkyl group;

n is 0, 1 or 2;

y is 0, 1 or 2;

z is 0 an integer from 1 to 4; and

R_5 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group, a C_{3-8} alkenyl group, or a phenyl-C_{1-4} alkyl group.

~~22~~ 5. The compound of Claim ~~21~~, wherein

O is a six-membered aryl group; and

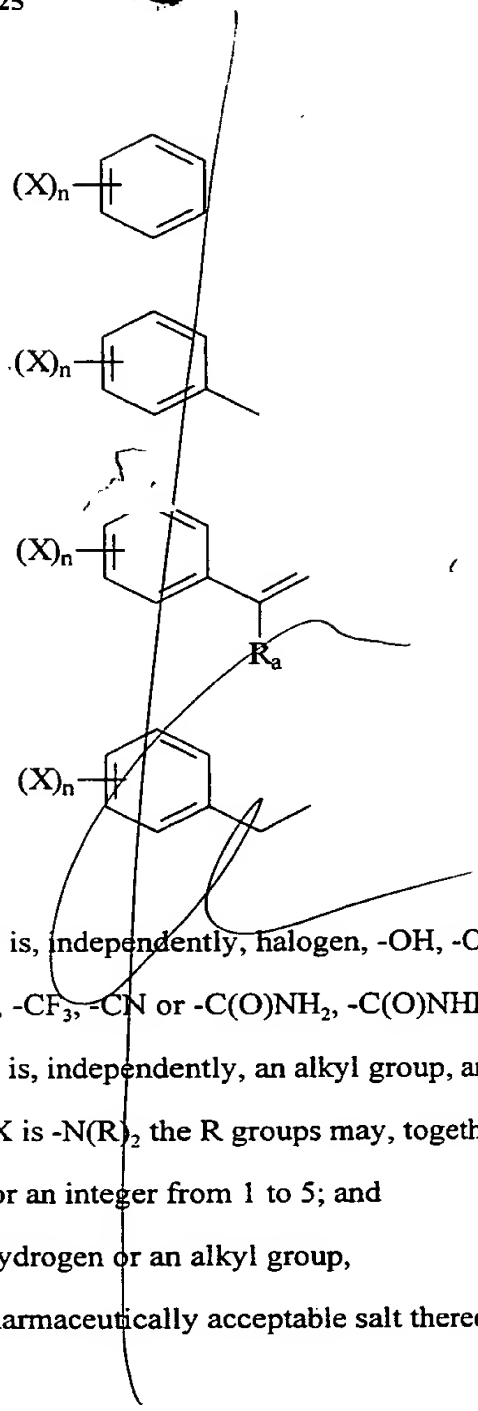
z is an integer from 1 to 4.

23. A method of binding opioid receptors, comprising administering an effective amount of the compound of Claim 1 to a mammalian subject in need thereof.

24. A method of binding opioid receptors, comprising administering an effective amount of the compound of Claim 6 to a mammalian subject in need thereof.

25. A method of binding opioid receptors, comprising administering an effective amount of the compound of Claim 11 to a mammalian subject in need thereof.

~~26~~ 7. A method of binding opioid receptors, comprising administering an effective amount of the compound of Claim ~~17~~ 1 to a mammalian subject in need thereof.



each X is, independently, halogen, -OH, -OR, an alkyl group, an aryl group, $-NH_2$, -NHR, $-N(R)_2$, $-CF_3$, -CN or $-C(O)NH_2$, -C(O)NHR, or $-C(O)N(R)_2$;

each R is, independently, an alkyl group, an aryl group or an alkaryl group, wherein when X is $-N(R)_2$ the R groups may, together, form a cyclic alkyl group;

n is 0 or an integer from 1 to 5; and

R_a is hydrogen or an alkyl group,

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. The compound of Claim 1, wherein

R_1 is hydrogen, a C_{1-4} alkyl group, a phenyl group, or an aralkyl group;

R_2 is hydrogen or a C_{1-4} alkyl group; and

n is 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4.

3. The compound of Claim 2, wherein

R_1 is hydrogen or a C_{1-4} alkyl group; and

n is 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4.

4. The compound of Claim 3, wherein

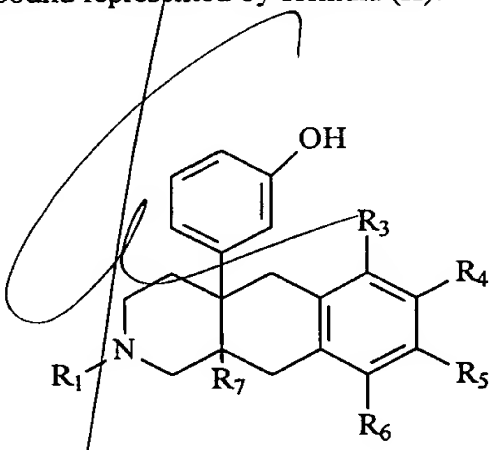
R_1 is hydrogen or a C_{1-3} alkyl group;

R_2 is hydrogen or a methyl group;

n is 1, 2, or 3, and at least one X is -OH, $-OCH_3$ or -F.

5. The compound of Claim 4, wherein at least one X is -OH.

6. A compound represented by formula (II):



(II)

R_1 is an alkyl group or aralkyl group; and

R_3, R_4, R_5, R_6 are each, independently, hydrogen, an alkyl group, -OH, $-NH_2$, -NHR, $-N(R)_2$, halogen, -OR, $-CF_3$, -CN, $-NO_2$, or -NHC(O)R, wherein when any of R_3, R_4, R_5, or R_6 is $N(R)_2$ the R groups may, together, form a cyclic alkyl group;

each R is, independently, an alkyl group, an aryl group, or an alkaryl group; and

R_7 is hydrogen or an alkyl group,

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

7. The compound of Claim 6, wherein

R_1 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group or an aryl-C_{1-4} alkyl group;

at most three of R_3, R_4, R_5, R_6 are each, independently, an alkyl group, -OH, $-NH_2$, -NHR, $-N(R)_2$, halogen, -OR, $-CF_3$, -CN, $-NO_2$, or -NHC(O)R; and

R_7 is hydrogen or a C_{1-8} alkyl group.

8. The compound of Claim 7, wherein

R_1 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group or a phenyl-C_{1-4} alkyl group;

at most two of R_3, R_4, R_5, and R_6 are each, independently, an alkyl group, -OH, $-NH_2$, -NHR, $-N(R)_2$, halogen, -OR, $-CF_3$, -CN, $-NO_2$, or -NHC(O)R;

R_7 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group.

9. The compound of Claim 8, wherein

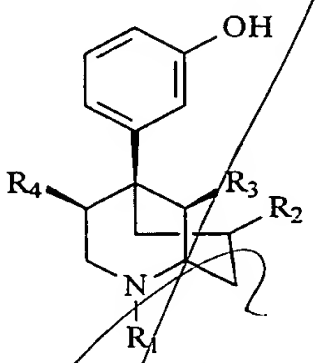
R_1 is a C_{1-4} alkyl group or an aryl-C_{1-3} alkyl group;

one of R_3, R_4, R_5, or R_6 is an alkyl group, -OH, $-NH_2$, -NHR, $-N(R)_2$, halogen, -OR, $-CF_3$, -CN, $-NO_2$, or -NHC(O)R; and

R_7 is a C_{1-4} alkyl group.

10. The compound of Claim 9, wherein R_3, R_4, R_5, and R_6 are hydrogen.

11. A compound represented by formula (III):



(III)

where

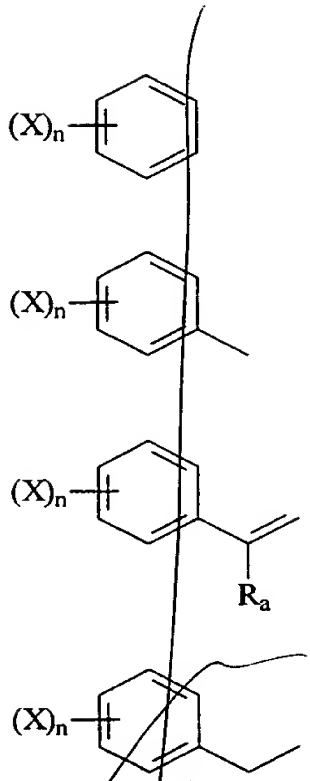
R_1 is an alkyl group or an aralkyl group;

R_2 is hydrogen, an alkyl group, an aralkyl group, =O, $-NH_2$, -NHR, $-N(R)_2$, -NHC(O)R, -NRC(O)R, $-NHC(O)R_5$, or $-NRC(O)R_5$;

R_3 and R_4 may be hydrogen or methyl, with the proviso that when R_3 is methyl then R_4 is hydrogen and when R_3 is hydrogen then R_4 is methyl;

each R is, independently, an alkyl group, an aryl group, or an alkaryl group; and

R_5 is



each X is, independently, halogen, -OH, -OR, an alkyl group, an aryl group, $-NH_2$, -NHR, $-N(R)_2$, $-CF_3$, -CN, $-C(O)NH_2$, -C(O)NHR, or $-C(O)N(R)_2$;

each R is, independently, an alkyl group, an aryl group, or an alkaryl group;

n is 0 or an integer from 1 to 5; and

R_a is hydrogen or an alkyl group,

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

12. The compound of Claim 11, wherein

R_1 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group or an aryl-C_{1-4} alkyl group;

R_3 is methyl; and

R_4 is hydrogen.

13. The compound of Claim 12, wherein R_1 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group or an phenyl-C_{1-4} alkyl group.

14. The compound of Claim 11, wherein

R_1 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group or an aryl-C_{1-4} alkyl group;

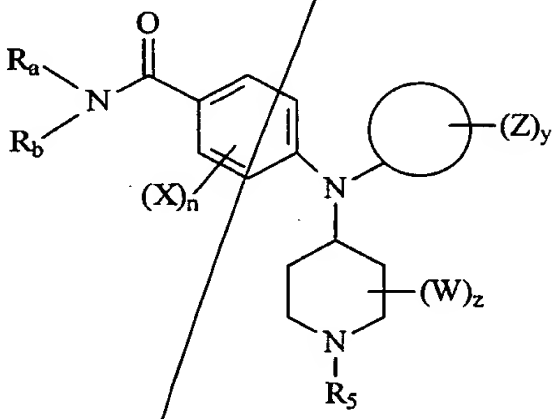
R_3 is hydrogen; and

R_4 is methyl.

15. The compound of Claim 14, wherein R_1 is a C_{1-8} alkyl group or an phenyl-C_{1-4} alkyl group.

16. The compound of Claim 11, wherein R2 is =O.

17. A compound represented by formula (IV):



(IV)

where

R_a and R_b are each, independently, hydrogen or an alkyl group, or R_a and R_b, together, form a cycloalkyl group;

each X is, independently, an alkyl group;

O is a five- or six-membered aryl or heteroaryl group;

each Z is, independently, an alkyl group, -OH, -OR, halogen, $-CF_3$, -CN, $-NH_2$, -NHR, or $-N(R)_2$, wherein when Z is $-N(R)_2$ the R groups may, together, form a cyclic alkyl group;

each R is, independently, an alkyl group, an aryl group, or an alkaryl group;

each W is an alkyl group;